

Booster seats now legal requirement in Kentucky

Secretary Prather: Action 'will help save young lives'

By: Mark Brown

A law aimed at improving safety for young passengers is now on the books in Kentucky. Gov. Steve Beshear signed Senate Bill 120 earlier this year, requiring children who are younger than 7 and between 40 and 50 inches tall to be secured in a child booster seat.

The bill requires law enforcement officers to issue "courtesy warnings" for violations until 2009, after which there will be a \$30 fine with no court costs. In addition, violators will have the option to purchase a booster seat instead of paying the fine.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, a properly installed, belt-positioning booster seat lowers the risk of injury to children by nearly 60 percent, compared with seat belts alone.

The legislation is a step in the right direction, according to Boyd Sigler, director of KYTC's Office of Highway Safety, which recommends that children less than 57 inches in height be properly restrained in a booster seat. Sigler points out that a lap and shoulder belt must be used in conjunction with the booster for it to be effective.

Gov. Beshear commended the Legislature for taking action to help protect children who have outgrown traditional child seats but aren't large enough for adult seat belts.

"Booster seats are proven to be effective. This bill provides a reasonable approach to help achieve our ultimate goal of saving lives and reducing injuries," said Gov. Beshear.

"Our goal is to help ensure Kentucky children are protected while traveling in a motor vehicle," said Transportation Secretary Joe Prather. "We believe this legislation, paired with our proactive efforts to help educate parents and caregivers about the most effective



Governor Beshear and Sophia Gabbert daughter of Vince and Tonya Gabbert.

safety procedures, will help save young lives."

Prather encouraged those who want guidance or information about booster seats to contact the cabinet's highway safety office at 1-888-374-8768. Information about child seats and other safety issues can also be found online at www.highwaysafety.ky.gov. □

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